

On Stage

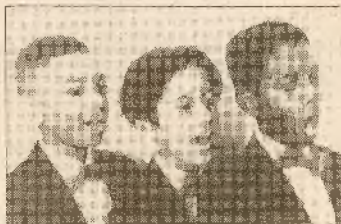
“P

BY
JAY
LUSTIG

raise & Celebration” is the title of the sixth annual OnStage In New Jersey performing arts series presented by the Newark-based Carter G. Woodson Foundation. “We always try to bring out a message, and what we’re trying to emphasize this year is the uplifting nature of African-American music and culture,” said series producer Nancy Diamond.

The series, which will include music, theater, dance and literary events in nine different New Jersey cities from mid-February to early June, was publicized at a press conference at the Newark Public Library last week.

The press conference introduced the Woodson Foundation’s new executive director, Gene Wesley, who has previously held executive positions at such organizations as the American Heart Association and the United Negro College Fund, and it featured speeches by three mayors who serve on the OnStage honorary committee—Sharpe



Laudatory lineup

lights way for

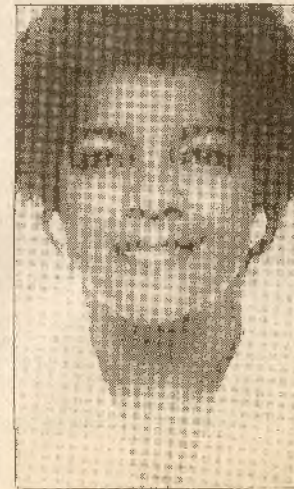
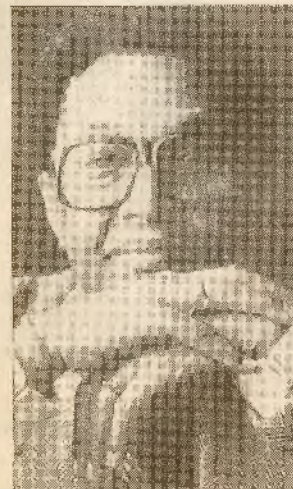
black arts series

Alley Repertory Ensemble Sunday, Feb. 21 at 3 p.m. at the John Harms Center For The Arts, 30 N. Brunt St., Englewood.

Next on the schedule are a variety of musical offerings. A cappella group Sweet Honey In The Rock will perform Friday, March 5 at 8 p.m. at Newark Symphony Hall, 1020 Broad St., Newark, and Saturday, March 6 at 7 p.m. at the Shea Auditorium of William Paterson College in Wayne. Jazz pianist Billy Taylor’s trio will perform at the Memorial Auditorium of Montclair State College Saturday, March 13 at 8 p.m., and gospel singer and evangelist Shirley Caesar will appear at Newark Symphony Hall Saturday, March 20 at 8 p.m.

The series’ most adventurous undertaking is Mary Lou Williams’ “Music For Peace” jazz mass, which will be presented at the Passaic County College Theatre in Paterson Friday, March 26 at 8 p.m., at Bloomfield College Saturday, March 27 at 8 p.m. and at the New Jersey State Museum, 205 W. State St., Trenton, Sunday, March 28 at 3:30 p.m.

“This, to me, is the most exciting part of the series,” said Diamond. “It’s something we’re actually producing, as opposed to presenting. Mary Lou’s mass has not been performed since she died (in 1981), though



Billy Taylor (top left) brings his trio to Montclair State College; gospel

Performing in this year's OnStage in New Jersey series are (top) the Newark Boys Chorus and (above) the Irvington-based Return To The Source in a free concert at Irvington High School, and (right) the a cappella group Sweet Honey In The Rock at Newark Symphony Hall

James of Newark, Cardell Cooper of East Orange and Michael Steele of Irvington.

All expressed great pride at being involved with the non-profit organization, whose stated mission is "to research, preserve, perpetuate and celebrate the creative expressions, the cultural heritage and the historic achievements of African-American artists through performances, exhibits and educational activities throughout the United States."

This year's series will begin with its lone dance event, a performance by the Alvin

there. So we contacted the estate and got the music, which (the estate's executor) literally has in shopping bags in this little retreat in Syracuse.

Bloomfield College music professor Byorte Wilson Johnson will be musical director for the project, and jazz pianist Hilton Ruiz's quartet, the Bloomfield College Choir and the vocal group Fortitude will be featured performers. "Mary Lou's Mass," a documentary film covering both Williams' life and the story of the musical piece's creation, will be shown all three nights.

"We always try to introduce the audiences to things they may not have seen be-

Please turn to Page 78



singer Shirley Caesar (top right) appears at Newark Symphony Hall; the North Carolina Black Repertory Company's (above) production of 'Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope' is billed for Essex County College, and author Terry McMillan (left) speaks at East Orange High School as part of the OnStage series



e chanteuse

"All the Things You Are." But it also includes three Mike Moran originals, for one of which—an arresting rhumba called "Can't Get Away from That Song"—Kitt supplied the lyrics on her own.

Return now to chanteuse—a female concert or nightclub singer, and that transports us to another lady who recently set her own lyrics to someone else's music, this one the pop number "You Can't Sit Down." The performer in focus here is Lauren Hart, who, like Kitt Moran, is appearing these evenings in Atlantic City. In Hart's case, the applicable hours are from 6:30 to 10:30 all nights except Mondays and Tuesdays through Sunday, Feb. 21, on the stage of Viva's Nightclub at Trump's Castle Casino Resort.

"Well, that was at Garden State," she said, in describing that one song with the special lyrics.

"Ah," an interviewer said. "The arts center."

"No," Hart said, "the race track. It was two days before the election. Bill Clinton was there."

Thanks to a marvelous inborn talent and to "a million cattle calls," she said, in support of April Anast's observation that exaggeration is the quickest way to the truth, the young Hart, a classical and jazz voice major from Temple University, has sung her way to prominence from here to Monte Carlo. Locally, it's been on stages at Bally's and the Sands and Caesars and the Castle, and these nights her presence at Viva's, along with piano, guitar and drums, is in its own way a throwback to Kitt Moran in those trio-backed times at the Village Squire.

Like Moran, Hart does Rodgers and Hart. Something poetic in that Hart-to-Hart continuum? Never mind. Hart also does Patty Austin and Bonnie Raitt, and Andrew Lloyd Webber. For the ultimate definition, check Webster's New Collegiate, under C for chanteuse.



The Bloomfield College Choir performs in various locations throughout the state as part of the OnStage series

Laudatory lineup lighting the way for OnStage series

Continued from Page 69

fore, whether it be a local group or something like the 'Music For Peace' program, which is a really uncommon presentation," said Diamond.

The series continues with four performances of the musical, "Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope," by the North Carolina Black Repertory Company, Thursday, April 15 through Saturday, April 17 at Essex County College in Newark.

The first of the series' two free events, a concert by Newark's musical ambassadors—the Newark Boys Chorus—and the Return To The Source ensemble, takes place Sunday, May 4 at 4 p.m., at Irvington High School. Return To The Source, said Diamond, "are based in Irvington, and do an interactive program—some singing, and some speaking about the spiritual history of the African-American community."

Next, Terry McMillan, author of novels such as "Waiting to Exhale" and "Disappearing Acts," will give a talk and reading Saturday, May 15 at 8 p.m. at East Orange High School.

The series' final event, and its second free event, will be a showcase of New Jersey composers and pianists, presented in conjunction with the New Jersey Composers Guild, on Sunday, June 6 at 2 p.m. at the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton.

Tickets to all the performances are available through the Newark Symphony Hall box office. Prices are \$28 for the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble; \$20 for Sweet Honey In The Rock, the Billy Taylor Trio and "Music For Peace" at the State Museum; and \$15 for Shirley Caesar, "Music For Peace" at Passaic County College and Bloomfield College, "Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope" and Terry McMillan. Group and subscription discounts are available.



7:00		PASSAIC	
7:45		CLIFTON	
No-	ALLWOOD	- Scent of a Woman (R) 8:00; - Loren-	
7:00	- Zo's Oil (PG-13) 7:10, 9:45; - Sniper (R) 7:30, 9:30;		
9:45	- Used People (PG-13) 7:25, 9:40; - Aladdin (G)		
	7:05, 8:55; - Aspen Extreme (PG-13) 7:05; - Hexed		
(R)	(R) 6:00; - Forever Young (PG) 9:20		
2:55	CLIFTON	- Few Good Men (R) 7:30; - Bodyguard	
4:30	(R) 7:30; - Alive (R) 7:15; - Nowhere to Run (R)		
5:30	7:15		
ople	HAWTHORNE		
1:25	HAWTHORNE	- Scent of a Woman (R) 7:45; - Alive	
		- 2:55; - Sniper (R) 7:30, 9:35; - Aladdin	